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Toner J. M.

NOTES  
ON THE  
BURNING OF THEATRES  
AND  
PUBLIC HALLS.

REFLECTIONS  
ON SOME OF THE CAUSES OF THE GREAT MORTAL-  
ITY OCCASIONALLY ATTENDING SUCH FIRES,  
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED  
SECURITY TO LIFE.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE DRAMA  
AND THE OPENING OF THEATRES IN  
AMERICA, WITH A  
CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THEATRES  
AND OTHER PUBLIC EDIFICES BURNED,

BY  
J. M. TONER, M. D.,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

R. O. POLKINHORN, PRINTER,  
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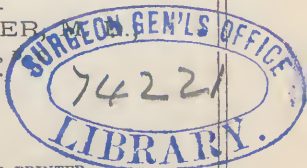
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# *Destruction of Theaters*

AND

## OTHER PUBLIC HALLS.

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From time to time there are occurrences of a character which suddenly transform public security and private happiness into the greatest sorrow, and deeply move the sympathies of a nation. An event of this character was the burning of the Brooklyn Theater on the 5th of December, 1876. The evening was pleasant, and the somewhat sensational though attractive play of the "Two Orphans" had brought thither a large and happy audience. The fire occurred at 11:20 o'clock, and it is estimated that there were in the building at the time not less than twelve hundred people, of whom over three hundred lost their lives. I shall make no effort to picture to the imagination the horror or extent of the dreadful calamity. The daily press has teemed with graphic accounts, which no doubt have been read by all. Indeed, the imagination requires but little aid to realize the awfulness of the scene where a whole audience were suddenly thrown into a panic, and were frantically pressing amid stifling smoke toward doors and windows, and struggling to escape from a burning building and impending death.

Nor shall I dwell upon the melancholy spectacle of the over-crowded morgues, filled with blackened and mutilated human remains, which lay for days in the vain hope that an anxious friend might by some happy chance recognize the body. But, while I leave these shocking scenes for the imagination to depict, it may be of interest to recall some of the more notable instances of the destruction of play-houses and public edifices, and indulge a few reflections on some of the causes of the great mortality that occasionally attend them. I apprehend that

the frequency with which such accidents occur is much greater both in our own, and in other countries than is generally supposed.

The fact is notorious that buildings arranged for theatrical entertainment and spectacular representations are, from the nature of their construction and decoration, particularly liable to accident by fire. But, although the burning of theaters and opera houses is somewhat frequent, the recent fire in Brooklyn, and the burning of the theater in Richmond, Va., are fortunately exceptional in the appalling loss of life. It is very probable that the mortality in these instances was in a measure due to defective construction, and perhaps faulty in management.

#### CALAMITIES SOON FORGOTTEN.

We are all apt to forget facts and occurrences, even when they are of an afflicting character, and have for a time attracted general notoriety. The current of life hurries on so swiftly that the mind soon becomes oblivious to events, which at the moment of their happening profoundly shocked us, and from which we think we can never recover; but the hopefulness and buoyancy of our nature renders the traditional nine days' wonder too short for us to look for the cause and seek for a preventive against a recurrence. Hence we may expect the public everywhere shortly to forget not only this late disaster, but the fact that there is scarcely a place of public amusement of many years' standing in any of our large cities that has not at some time been burned, and the principal ones a number of times, and that some such shocking catastrophe as the Brooklyn horror may any day astound us here. With a view of refreshing the memory on this subject and of drawing attention to the liability and causes of fire in this class of buildings, I have looked up the names and dates of such accidents as have occurred in this city. Finding the list in Washington so much larger than expected, I have extended the inquiry so as to embrace all parts of our country and a few of the most notable instances in Europe. A chronological

list of them is appended to the end of this paper. Many pious and cultivated persons, as well as those who have little taste for the drama, wonder why people will persist in going to theaters, considering their liability to accidents and the unceasing protests of theologians.

#### TASTE FOR THE DRAMA UNIVERSAL.

In deference to these opinions it may not be out of place to say a word on the universality of dramatic taste, and the antiquity of the theater. It is more than probable that there exists in our nature a love for dramatic and spectacular representation as it has been observed that the masses in all countries and in every degree of civilization delight in them.

Plays were a pastime with and encouraged by the earliest nations of which we have any account. Perhaps the Greek and Roman theaters escaped destruction from fire chiefly because their exhibitions were in daylight, and their structures were uncovered and often in the open fields. Their theaters were generally built of stone on sloping ground which answered the purpose of raised seats. The stage was slightly raised, built solid, and a little inclined from the audience, so as to bring all parts into full view. In some instances these structures were of such vast proportions as to be capable of holding eighty thousand people. With the decadence of Grecian and Roman power their drama and peculiar games declined, as did also their art and literature, and in time became almost forgotten.

#### THE DRAMA AND THE EARLY CHURCH.

For centuries after the Christian era, and wherever Christian civilization had influence and power, plays and games that did not tend to develop man's spiritual and moral nature were not allowed. The Church, however, saw in this general fondness for dramatic representations, a channel through which to impart lessons in religion and morality, and at the same time delight the people. This, I think, accounts for the fact that for many centuries in Christian countries stage representations were of a

biblical and legendary character. We learn from history that dramatic representations, called the "mysteries," were common during the eighth century in France and Germany, and indeed in all the southern countries of Europe. These exhibitions were chiefly conducted at universities, colleges, and monasteries, affording instruction, and amusing not only to the inmates but to the populace. The Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection, and other mysteries in the life of our Saviour being the favorite subjects of representation. Exhibitions of this character are still given in Suabia and in parts of France and Germany. The art of the drama was much improved during the period of the Crusades, and it is believed Christian morality and the mysteries of religion were often made attractive by dramatic art, and aided in turning the minds of multitudes of people from profane to sacred subjects. Thus, it is supposed, grew up the religious drama, or the "mysteries," as the plays were then denominated.

#### THE MODERN DRAMA IN EUROPE.

Reference is made to them in the history of Great Britain before 1300. Shortly before 1500 play-houses existed in London. A little later we learn they were supported some by subscription and others by small admittance fees. The modern drama is now in all its branches perhaps freer from the objections urged against it by moralists than at any period in the past. It is just to remark that opposition to the theatrical entertainments has been as active in our own country as in any part of the world, and their introduction most strenuously resisted by the theologians in almost every State of the Union. We are indebted for our acquaintance with the modern drama in its purity and integrity to Shakspeare. All his predecessors, and indeed many of his contemporaries and immediate successors in that field, bear the same relation to his immortal creations as the productions of the Minerva press to the awakening of the historic novel in the hands of Walter Scott.

## THEATERS OPENED IN AMERICA.

It may not be amiss to allude to the time when theaters were established in our country. The first one was opened at Williamsburg, Va., September 5, 1752; others soon followed at Annapolis, Md., and in New York in 1753, Philadelphia 1754, Albany, N. Y., 1769, Baltimore, Md., 1773, Charleston, S. C., 1774, Newburn, N. C., 1788, Boston 1792, and Washington in 1802. The first theater lighted by gas in the United States was the new theater in Philadelphia, opened in 1816.

## THEATERS BURNED IN WASHINGTON.

The first theater erected in Washington was in 1803. It was burned in 1820. The leading theater here, the "National," has been burned three times; first, on March 5, 1845; second, February 6, 1857; third, January 28, 1873. "Ford's Theater," now the Army Medical Museum, was built in 1833 for a church, and was occupied as such for many years. In 1860 it was purchased and converted into a theater, but was accidentally burned in 1863. It was rebuilt and used as a theater until the foul assassination in it of President Lincoln, on the 14th of April, 1865. That event so shocked the feelings of the nation that the Administration determined to convert the building to some national use, and preserve the site as a memorial of that horrible occurrence. It was, therefore, purchased, and has been greatly changed and rendered fire-proof, and is now known as the Army Medical Museum, and also contains the national medical library.

Canterbury Hall, a variety theater on Louisiana avenue, was destroyed by fire July 23, 1869. Wall's Opera House was burned December 6, 1871. That no lives have been lost in the destruction of the theaters in Washington is due more to the fact that the fires occurred when there was no audience in them than to any superior construction or mode of egress.

## THE BURNING OF THE RICHMOND THEATER.

The question of improved modes of exit from theaters and other assembly buildings have been much

discussed ever since the Richmond fire. The only calamities in America at all comparable with the late fire at Brooklyn, the latter, however, is so recent, and has filled so large a space in the daily papers as to require very brief allusion here, was that of the burning of the Richmond Theater on the 26th December, 1811, and the Royal Theater, in the city of Quebec, June 14, 1846. There were in the Richmond Theater on the night of the fire over 600 people. The commissioners appointed at a public meeting called for the purpose of investigating the origin of the fire and the causes of the great mortality reported that there were 598 persons known to be in the building. The number lost was never accurately known, as there were many strangers in the city at the time, and it was surmised that some of them may have been at this place of amusement; but the number reported lost, with their names a few days after, amounted to seventy-two. Later statements relating to this calamity placed the number of lives lost at 123, of whom fifty were females. There were between forty and forty-five bodies so disfigured by the fire that they could not be recognized.

#### THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE AND THE GREAT MORTALITY.

The committee also reported that, in their judgment, the mortality would not have been near so great except for the fact that there was but one door of exit and a narrow winding stairs to the gallery. This fire occurred shortly after 10 o'clock, at the beginning of the second act of a pantomimic after-piece, which was entitled the "Bleeding Nun; or, Agnes and Raymond." In the first act of the piece was exhibited the cottage of *Baptist*, the robber, constructed of cotton cloth, and oiled to make it transparent, and which was illuminated by a suspended chandelier. One of the lamps in the chandelier was left burning when it was raised to its place among the scenery. From this originated the fire. Neither the walls nor the ceiling of the building was plastered; but both were covered with painted canvas. The pine planks upon which the shingles of the roof were



laid had become so dry as to burn like tinder. These two conditions favored the rapid extension of the fire to all parts of the building. It was stated that in less than five minutes from the time the fire caught the whole interior was in a blaze or filled with heated air and suffocating smoke, rendering it impossible for a human being in it to breathe.

#### SUFFOCATION THE CAUSE OF MANY DEATHS.

In such a condition numbers were no doubt suffocated almost instantly. The testimony of those who saved their lives justifies the conclusion that many of those who perished were overcome by suffocation while endeavoring to reach the door, and, falling, were trampled on by others of greater strength and endurance. Those falling probably never recovered from the suffocation and expired before the fire reached them, which would be fortunate for the victims of such catastrophes. This hypothesis best accounts for the fact that in a very few minutes no cries were heard from those inside, who were, no doubt, doing all in their power to escape, but were unable to breathe the heated air and irritating smoke, and consequently, could neither speak, scream, nor give any notice of their hopeless and perishing condition. Probably death would ensue from suffocation in such cases, particularly where the smoke is dense, in from one to three minutes, while death by burning, unless a flame or heated air was inhaled, would be slow and extremely agonizing. The instances are quite numerous where lives have been lost by crushing, in panics while endeavoring to escape from a theater, and also deaths caused by suffocation even where the fire has been put out without the destruction of the building. Few persons, except experienced firemen, have a just conception of how soon the strength of the strongest man will be overcome by a dense smoke.

#### FIRE-PROOF BUILDINGS NOT A SUFFICIENT SECURITY.

It is not only probable but almost certain that if a theater was built fire-proof, as regards walls, ceilings, floors, and seats, that the other perishable ma-

terial, such as curtains, scenery, stage furniture, would in burning generate sufficient smoke and heated air to fill the building with an irrespirable gas, that would destroy an audience in a very few minutes unless they could escape. If this view be correct, the inference is inevitable that the construction of a fire-proof building is not alone a sufficiently safe guarantee against recurrences of disasters of this kind.

THE BEST PROTECTION IS DIRECT AND UNOBSTRUCTED  
EXIT.

The only real safety is ready, unobstructed, and efficient exit. It is a useless waste of time to talk of controlling or even directing a panic-stricken crowd. Some additional safety, however, it is hoped may be gained in the direction of prevention. The discussion of the subject has already brought forward some good suggestions from a scientific standpoint.

RECENT SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SECURITY.

That the scenery be painted in water colors instead of oil, and that the curtains, flies, and all scenery be rendered unflammable by being saturated in a solution of the tungstate of soda or sulphate of magnesia, alum, or some other chemical substance imparting this quality. The suggestion that a wire screen or curtain be placed in every theater, so that in cases of fire on the stage it can be dropped. This would probably retard the flames in reaching the auditorium, and is worthy of adoption. A suggestion has also been offered that an arrangement of water pipes be so made on the stage, with outlets so directed as to deluge every part of the scenery, and which, in case of fire, could be instantly applied. That the partition between the auditorium and the stage should be a brick wall, and be carried up solid over the arch opening to the stage to above the roof. This would undoubtedly tend to retard the flames from reaching the body of the house. The wire shield around all gas jets recently introduced into theaters no doubt serves a good purpose.

These and many other preventive measures that

have or may be devised will tend to give additional security, but there is no substitute or safety equal to ample and ready modes of egress. It is, therefore, the duty of the guardians of the public health to insist, yes, compel, owners and lessees of such buildings to give the people all the security that ready exit from such structures can afford against accidents, for even when all known precautions have been taken and faithfully applied to theaters, there remains incident and inseparable from them, and in large gatherings, sufficient liability to danger.

#### GALLERIES LESS SAFE THAN OTHER PARTS OF THEATERS.

There is one great objection to the present mode of approach to and exit from all galleries; the higher the tier the greater the defect. It is well known that the galleries are always reached by stairs that land at the level of the highest seat of the tier. This is from eight to fifteen feet, according to the width of the gallery, above the level of the front seats, which are reached by descending along a narrow passage between the seats. Egress from the galleries for this reason is difficult even when there is no excitement. It would be much safer if approaches were made direct to the galleries on a level with the lower or front row of seats. This, however, would require a sacrifice of some room in a desirable part of the house.

#### LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THEATERS.

Safety would be enhanced if theaters were situated so as to have an open space on all sides of them, as such a location would admit the greatest number of doors for freer exit in emergencies. A very objectionable situation, unless where sufficient vacant space be reserved for the special purpose of escape *from at least three sides*, is where the audience room and stage are built on deep lots and in the rear of stores, shops, and other business houses. Such a location adds a new danger, for these buildings in front of the theater may take fire or the long passageway become filled with suffocating smoke, and thus

cut off the common mode of exit. A good suggestion has been made, and often urged in the construction of theaters, but rarely or never adopted, which is to have separate stairways to the galleries without winding, and opening directly upon a street. The theater, when built in a block, ought to front directly upon the street, and the whole width be made available to facilitate exit in case of fire.

Among those who lost their lives in the Richmond conflagration was the Governor of the State and some of the most accomplished and enterprising citizens of the city of Richmond and of the State of Virginia. Indeed, not over half a dozen of the poorer class were lost in this fire.

#### THE BURNING OF THE BROOKLYN THEATER.

The reverse of this fact is true of the Brooklyn calamity, in which nearly all the mortality fell upon the poorer classes, who had sought cheap seats upon the upper tier. To this part of the house, near the ceiling, naturally arose the first heated air and stifling gas and smoke, which was speedily followed by flames. Added to this the fact that exit was only by ascending ten or fifteen feet before they could reach the head of the stairs, their perilous condition can be imagined. This, you see, would require these in the galleries to pass up through a part of the building early filled with irrespirable gas and smoke, or perhaps flame, to the only route of escape. I apprehend, therefore, that many of the victims were suffocated before they reached the stairway. It therefore seems probable that exit from this tier was in this manner cut off even before a jam occurred on the stairs or at the door. Of the three hundred who lost their lives in this conflagration one hundred and three bodies were so blackened, disfigured, and mutilated as not to be recognized by their friends.

#### THE BURIAL OF THE UNRECOGNIZED DEAD.

These remains were, however, respectfully interred in a lot secured for the purpose on Battle Hill in Greenwood Cemetery, where a monument commemorative of the calamity is to be erected. After the

Richmond fire the city government purchased the lot upon which the theater stood, and the forty-five unrecognized victims were interred on the site in a common grave. A memorial church has since been built upon a part of the lot, and also a monument erected, with an inscription proper to commemorate the sad event. It is stated as a fact that the Brooklyn Theater occupied a site where once stood a church. Considering the tendency of the mind, in great calamities like these to make dedicatory offerings, it would not be surprising if this lot should yet be rededicated to some public use as a memorial of this terrible holocaust which has so moved the sympathies of the country, and brought desolation and inexpressible grief and sorrow to many families.

#### DREAMS AND PRESENTMENTS OF CALAMITIES.

Following such calamities, and notably the one at Richmond, there were numerous accounts given by persons who claimed to have presentments and dreams that to their minds gave warning of the approach of that catastrophe. It is probable, therefore, that we will ere long be treated to similar accounts, which will claim to have foreshadowed the fire in Brooklyn.

#### BURNING OF THE ROYAL THEATER IN QUEBEC.

The destruction of the Royal Theater in the city of Quebec on June 14, 1846, next to those already mentioned, was attended with the greatest loss of life of any in America. In this case the fire caught in the scenery just as the play for the evening ended, and the audience were about leaving the theater, but the flames spread so rapidly, and so great became the panic, amid the darkness of the room by a suffocating smoke, that over fifty lives were lost within a few minutes.

#### CHURCHES AND OTHER EDIFICES OCCASIONING SACRIFICE OF LIFE.

We are reminded in our study that it is not theaters and play-houses alone that are liable to accidents by fire, or in which human life is occasionally

jeopardized or has been sacrificed. It is a fact that the most notable fire of the century occurred in the destruction during religious services of a church in Santiago, Chili, on the 8th of December, 1863. In this case some of the gauze embellishments caught fire from the lights on the high altar, and speedily extended to the paper decorations that festooned the building, and which was at the time brilliantly illuminated by twenty thousand paraffine lamps. Special preparation had been made for this occasion—the festival of the Immaculate Conception. It was estimated there were over three thousand worshippers in the church when the fire began. The building had but one door of easy exit. This, as is usual, soon became blocked by the frantic crowd, and over two thousand persons, mostly women and children, perished.

#### EARTHQUAKES, CYCLONES, ETC.

It is well known that human life is encompassed by many dangers and constantly liable to accidents from other causes than fire, some of which are mysterious and have occasionally been most calamitous in their results. I need only allude to the earthquake, the cyclone, and to floods. Within the last few months a cyclone in the East Indies is said to have caused the death of 300,000 people. But accidents of this character are neither germane to my subject, nor does time permit reference to them, nor to the class of accidents such as occurred at the Capitol in Richmond, where the floor gave way on the 27th of April, 1870, killing sixty and wounding a hundred and twenty persons. Giving due consideration to all the dangers that environ man, whether from convulsions of nature or those resulting from man's own ignorance and carelessness on sea or land, I am persuaded that we need to be particularly vigilant in guarding against accidents from fire, whether in our houses or in public audience rooms.

History shows the loss of human life by conflagrations to be so great, and so horrible, that the fire fiend may be added to the conventional trinity of

seourges, war, pestilence, and famine, making a fourth. To prevent or abate the three former has long been the effort of the Christian and philanthropist. Has the time not arrived for him to add another to the field of his labors?

The following list of casualties to theaters, churches, &c., although not presented as exhaustive, it is nevertheless sufficiently complete to show both the frequency and liability of this class of structures to destruction by fire and the great mortality attending them:

**B. C.**

548. Delphi Temple, (Greece.)

356. The temple of Ephesus in Greece.

**A. D.**

250. Pompey's celebrated theater at Pompeii.

532. St. Sophia's church, Constantinople.

1067. Cathedral at Canterbury, England.

1105. Aug., Bayeux cathedral, Normandy.

1126. Lincoln cathedral, England.

1137. St. Pauls cathedral, London.

1283. Jan. 2, Christ's church, Dublin.

1300. St. Patrick's cathedral, Dublin.

1613. June 29, Globe theatre, London.

1621. Dec. 9, Theater Fortune, Golden Lane, London;  
18 persons killed.

1623. Black Friars, London.

1666. Sept. 2, Great fire of London—St. Paul's and  
80 other churches burned.

1672. Jan., Drury Lane theater, London.

1676. Nov. 27, North Meeting House, Boston, Mass.

1727. Puppet show in a barn at Derbyshire, England,  
160 persons perished.

1769. The theater at Venice was struck by lightning  
during a representation, and many lives lost.

1770. At an exhibition of fireworks in Paris in honor  
of the Dauphini's marriage, by a panic and the  
breaking down of a bridge, nearly 1,000 persons  
lost their lives.

1772. The Flemish theater, at Amsterdam, took fire,  
and 150 persons were killed. A few years later it  
was burned and from 600 to 800 persons perished.

1773. Dec. 29, Trinity church, New York, burned.  
1773. Dec. 29, Lutheran church, New York, burned.  
1778. Church at Bossignia, France, fell while filled with worshipers, and taking fire, 600 persons perished.  
1778. Dec. 17, the theater at Saragossa, Spain, was burned, occasioning the death of 400 persons.  
1781. At the burning of the French Opera Palais Royal, Paris; 500 persons lost their lives.  
1783. July 31, the theater at Montpelier was destroyed by fire, and 500 lives were lost.  
1786. The theater at Metz was destroyed by fire during the day, on the falling of which 70 persons were burned and many crushed to death.  
1788. Italian Opera House, London.  
1789. The Opera House, London.  
1789. June 18, Queen's Theater, Manchester, Eng.  
1789. Theater at Bury, Lancashire, England, fell, burying the audience beneath the ruins, 5 persons were killed and many injured.  
1791. Dec., theater at Clermont, France, the floor gave away, by which 36 were killed and 57 badly wounded.  
1792. The Pantheon, Oxford street, London.  
1794. The theater at Cape D'Istria, in Italy, fell and crushed the audience and players to death; 1,000 persons perished.  
1794. The Royal Palace, Copenhagen, was destroyed by fire; 100 lives were lost.  
1794. Aug. 17, Astley's Amphitheater, London.  
1794. Little theater in Haymarket, London; in a panic, 15 persons were trodden to death.  
1794. Dec. 26, German Lutheran Church, Phila.  
1795. Church of St. Nicholas, Potsdam.  
1795. Sept. 11, St. Paul's Covent Garden Church burned.  
1796. Aug. 17, theater at Nantez destroyed by fire during a performance and 70 persons lost their lives.  
1796. Dec. 4, Methodist Church, Baltimore, Md.  
1797. Theater at Smyrna burned by the Janissarians.  
1798. Feb. 2, theater Federal street, Boston, Mass.



1799. Dec. 17, Rickett's circus, Philadelphia, burned.
1802. June, Goodman Fields's theater, London.
1803. Sept. 2, Astley's Amphitheater, London.
1803. Jan. 15, Bowen's museum, Boston.
1805. Aug. 12, St. George's theater, London, burned during the performance of a circus company.
1805. Surrey theater, London, England.
1805. The Royal Circus Black Friars, London.
1807. Jan. 16, Bowen & Doyle's museum, Boston, destroyed.
1807. Oct. 18, at Sadler's Wells, London, the cry "a fight," was mistaken for that of "a fire;" a universal alarm ensued, and 18 persons were crushed or trampled to death.
- 1807-8. The theater at Altona, near Hamburg, was consumed by fire and many lives lost.
1808. Sept. 20, Covent Garden Theater, London, destroyed.
1808. July 1, theater in Berlin.
1809. Feb. 24, Drury Lane Theater, London.
1811. Portuguese Synagogue, London.
1811. Dec. 26, Richmond Theater, Va., nearly 100 lives lost.
1812. July 10, fire started at both ends of London bridge and destroyed 3,000 lives.
1816. Catholic Church at Quebec, Canada.
1818. March 20, theater at Oden burned.
1820. March 5, theater at Exeter, England.
1820. Washington Theater, D. C.
1820. April 2, Chestnut Street Theater, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1821. July 4, Park Theater, New York.
1822. January 23, Philadelphia Orphan Asylum burned; 23 children perished.
1822. Sept. 5, Nacheze Theater, Nacheze, Mass.
1823. July 15, St. Paul's Church, Rome.
1828. Feb. 28, New Brunswick Theater, Godman's Fields, London, fell; 7 persons killed.
1828. May 28, Bowery Theater, New York.
1829. Lafayette Theater, New York.
1830. Caldwell's Theater, Cincinnati, Ohio.
1830. February 16, Lyceum Theater, London.

1831. November 30, theater, Augusta, Georgia.  
 1831. July 14, Richmond Hill Theater, New York.  
 1835. July, Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, Va.,  
 struck by lightning and burned.  
 1836. Eagle Theater, New York.  
 1836. Sept. 22, New Bowery Theater, second time.  
 1836. Oct. 22, Caldwell's Theater, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
 1838. Jan. 5, Front Street Theater, Baltimore, Md.  
 1838. Feb. 3, Front Street Theater, Buffalo, N. Y.  
 1838. Feb. 6, Mobile Theater, Mobile, Ala.  
 1838. January 15, Opera House, France.  
 1838. Feb. 18, Bowery Theater, N. Y., third time.  
 1838. April 27, New Theater, Charleston, S. C.  
 1839. Sep. 23, National Theater, New York.  
 1839. Oct. 10, Government Theater, Mobile, Ala.  
 1841. May 23, National Theater, New York, second  
 time.  
 1842. March 13, St. Charles Theater, New Orleans  
 La.  
 1842. July 29, American Theater, New Orleans, La.  
 1842. Sept. 22, American Theater, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
 1842. Nov. 13, State Theater, Mobile, Ala.  
 1844. May 7, Theater Royal, Manchester England.  
 1844. Oct. 24, Providence Theater, Rhode Island.  
 1845. Jan. 8, Shire's Garden Theater, Cincinnati,  
 Ohio.  
 1845. March 5, National Theater, Washington, D. C.  
 1845. May 25, Theater in Canton, China, 2,300 lives  
 lost.  
 1845. April 25, Bowery Theater, N. Y., fourth time.  
 1846. Feb. 25, Howard Athenæum, Boston.  
 1846. Jan. 14, Theater at New Orleans, La.  
 1846. June 14, Royal Theater, Quebec, fifty persons  
 lost their lives.  
 1846. Sept. 18, Niblo's Theater, New York.  
 1848. Dec. 16, Park Street Theater, New York.  
 1849. Olympia Theater, London.  
 1849. St. George's Cathedral, Toronto, Canada.  
 1850. June Vauderville, French Theater, San Fran-  
 cisco, Cal.  
 1850. Feb. 14, Avon Theater, Norfolk, Va.  
 1850. March, Tahama Theater, Sacramento, Cal.

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1850. March 18, theater at Lafayette, Ind.  
1851. May, Dramatic Museum, San Francisco.  
1851. May 4, Jenny Lind Theater, San Francisco.  
1851. May, Adelphi Theater, San Francisco.  
1851. July 15, Wood's Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
1851. October, J. B. Rice's Theater, Chicago.  
1851. Theater at Karlsruhe, Baden, attended with loss of life.  
1851. Dec. 29, Museum, Chestnut st., Philadelphia.  
1852. March 31, Tremont Temple and Chapman Hall, Boston.  
1852. April 22, National Theater, Boston, Mass.  
1852. American Theater, Sacramento, Cal.  
1852. March 31, Tremont Theater, Boston.  
1852. Spooner's Museum and Theater, Philadelphia.  
1853. Oct. 27, Museum, Providence, R. I.  
1853. Sanford's Opera House, Philadelphia.  
1854. Jan. 30, American Theater, Placerville, Cal.  
1854. Jan. 8, Metropolitan Hall, New York.  
1854. July 15, Chinese Museum, Philadelphia.  
1854. Nov. 21, Placidus Varieties, New Orleans, La.  
1855. May 6, Vaunnuhis Museum, New Orleans.  
1856. Rockwell's American Theater, Cincinnati.  
1856. Poydra's American Theater, New Orleans, La.  
1857. Feb. 6, National Theater, Washington.  
1857. Metropolitan Theater, San Francisco.  
1858. May 5, Crystal Palace, New York.  
1858. July 14, Union Theater, Leavenworth, Kan.  
1858. Nov. 15, Forbes's Theater, Providence, R. I.  
1859. Lyceum Theater, San Francisco.  
1859. Dec. 27, Coburg Theater, London; 76 persons were killed during the panic, and a great many injured,  
1860. State Theater, Mobile, Ala.. second time.  
1861. Richmond Theater burned.  
1861. Forrest's Theater, Sacramento, Cal.  
1863. March 23, National Theater, Boston, 2d time.  
1863. Charleston Theater, Charleston, S. C.  
1863. Dec. 8, Church, Santiago, Chilli, caught fire from a paraffine lamp during service; over 2,000 lives were lost.  
1863. New frame army theater, Alexandria, Va.

1864. Nov. 17, Maryville Theater, Maryville, Cal.  
 1865. Jan. 13, Royal Theater, Edinburgh; quite a number of lives lost.  
 1865. May 12, Hooley's Opera House, Brooklyn.  
 1865. Music Hall, Springfield, Mass.  
 1865. July 13, Barnum's Museum, between Fulton and Ann street, New York.  
 1865. October 6, Bowery Theater, St. Louis, Mo.  
 1865. Surrey Theater, London.  
 1866. Feb. 13, Butler's American Theater, N. Y.  
 1866. March 22, Pike's Opera House, Cincinnati.  
 1866. March 21, Academy of Music, New York.  
 1866. July 12, Academy of Music, Cincinnati.  
 1866. Dec. 18, New Bowery Theater, New York.  
 1867. March 23, Winter Garden Theater, New York.  
 1867. June 19, Variety Theater, Philadelphia.  
 1868. Jan. 29, Academy of Music, Albany, N. Y.  
 1868. Feb. 16, American Theater, San Francisco.  
 1868. Frank Rivers's Variety Theater, Philadelphia.  
 1868. March 3, Barnum's Museum, New York.  
 1868. April 8, Butler's American Theater, New York.  
 1868. Dec. 4, Theatre Comique, New York.  
 1868. Dec. 23, Olympic Theater, New Orleans, La.  
 1868. Feb. 28, Opera House, St. Louis, Mo.  
 1869. Jan. 2, Olympic Theater, Detroit, Mich.  
 1869. May 10, Opera House, Dayton, Ohio.  
 1869. May 28, Theater, Atlanta, Ga.  
 1869. July 23, Canterbury Hall, Washington, D. C.  
 1869. Nov. 6, Metropolitan Theater, Rochester, N. Y.  
 1869. Nov. 7, Variety Theater, Helena, Montana.  
 1869. Nov. 15, Gayety Theater, Milwaukee, Wis.  
 1869. Dec. 2, Galveston Theater, Texas.  
 1869. Dec. 24, Opera House, Lafayette, Ind.  
 1870. Jan. 17, Opera Hall, Indianapolis, Ind.  
 1870. March 3, Barnum's Museum, Broadway, N. Y.  
 1870. Dec. 1, Variety Theater, New Orleans.  
 1871. Feb. 5, Adelphi Theater, Boston, Mass.  
 1871. April 8, Griswold's Opera House, Troy, N. Y.  
 1871. Oct. 9, Crosby's Music Hall, Chicago, Ill.  
 1871. Oct. 9, Dearburn Theater, Chicago, Ill.  
 1871. Oct. 9, Wood's Museum, Chicago, Ill.  
 1871. Oct. 9, Olympic Theater, Chicago, Ill.

1871. Oct. 9, Farewell Hall, Chicago, Ill.  
 1871. Oct. 9, Hooley's Opera House, Chicago, Ill.  
 1871. Oct. 9, McVicker's Theater, Chicago, Ill.  
 1871. Dec. 4, Placide's Variety Theater, New Orleans, second time.  
 1871. Dec. 6, Wall's Opera House, Washington.  
 1871. Mar. 20, Simmons & Slocum's Arch Street Opera House, Philadelphia.  
 1872. May 6, Niblo's Garden Theater, New York.  
 1872. May 8, Squier's Opera House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.  
 1872. March 11, Martin Hall, Albany, N. Y.  
 1872. Nov. 9, Buckley's Minstrel Hall, Boston.  
 1872. Nov. 28, Kelly & Leon's Minstrel Hall, N. Y.  
 1872. Nov. 28, Lind Edwin's Theater, New York.  
 1872. June, Liberty Hall Theater, Alexandria, Va.  
 1872. July 14, Adelphi Theater, Chicago, Ill.  
 1872. Dec. 24, Barnum's Museum, New York.  
 1872. Amsterdam Play-house burned; 800 people perished.  
 1872. Saragossa Theater, Spain; 600 people perished.  
 1872. Dec. 25, Baptist Church, Williamsport, Pa., fell; 15 persons killed, and 100 injured.  
 1873. Jan. 9, Spencer's Opera House, Park's Landing, Pa.  
 1873. Jan. 28, National Theater, Washington, D. C., third time.  
 1873. Feb. 9, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, Washington, D. C.  
 1873. March 25, Opera House, New York.  
 1873. May 7, Jones's Athenæum, Taunton, Mass.  
 1873. May 30, Globe Theater, Boston, Mass.  
 1873. Oct. 12, Crump's Opera House, Columbia, Ind.  
 1873. July 1, Fifth Avenue Theater, New York.  
 1873. July 4, Adelphi Theater, Chicago, Ill.  
 1873. Sept. 10, Holiday Street Theater, Baltimore, Md.  
 1874. Jan. 1, Franenthal's Opera House, Wilkesbarre, Pa.  
 1874. Jan. 29, Olympia Theater, Philadelphia, Pa.  
 1874. Feb. 10, Hildenberger's Opera House, Bethlehem, Pa.  
 1874. Feb. 21, Wagner's Opera House, Wis.

1874. March 29, Academy of Music, Mich.  
1874. March 29. Vanderbilt Theater, Louisville, Ky.  
1874. Oct. 13, Baltimore Opera House, Md.  
1874. Nov. 6, Parmley's Hall, Peoria, Ill.  
1874. Nov. 25, Opera House, Brookville, Pa.  
1875. May 7, Catholic Church, South Holyoke, Mass.,  
burned during vesper services; 75 lives were lost,  
chiefly those who were in the gallery.  
1875. Theater Bremen, Prussia; 3 lives lost.  
1876. Feb. 5, False alarm of fire at a matinee in Rob-  
inson's Opera House, Cincinnati, Ohio; 10 persons  
were killed and over 100 injured.  
1876. Dec. 7, Adelphi Theater, Albany, N. Y.  
1876. Chinese Theater, San Francisco, and whilst  
the fire was being put out 17 Chinamen were crushed  
to death.  
1876. March 7, Old People's Home, Brooklyn, N. Y.  
18 lives lost.  
1876. Dec. 12. Kirk's Opera House, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
Total number, 219.
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